

# CALVET

## California Department of Veterans Affairs News

August / September 2008

Volume 3 Issue 2



### HOT NEWS

#### CALVET WOMEN VETERANS CONFERENCE A TOTAL SUCCESS

Nearly 150 women veterans from throughout California gathered for the first women veterans conference in more than 10 years, at the Lions Gate Hotel in Sacramento, to share military experiences, as well as to learn useful information vital to acquiring the veterans benefits they have earned.

Women veterans, especially those from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom return home with many of the same problems as the men. These women veterans suffer from severe war injuries, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and military sexual trauma in more numbers than before, and still many are not aware of the help available to them. Hopefully this conference shed some light on their issues but most importantly offered them solutions and venues for recovery."



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#### Message from the Secretary

The fiscal year is over and the calendar year more than half over. However, in Veterans Affairs, it is always a rolling year, since service, care, projects and needs never seem to abate because of the calendar. Having said that, it is useful to look back, occasionally, to see where we have come from.

First, in spite of recent developments having to do with the state's budget process, the Department's budget currently is strong, affording us the manpower, salary structure, maintenance dollars and operational resources needed to continue carrying out our mission. We know that there are never enough people, time or money to meet every conceivable need but we have become much better in articulating our needs and we have a leadership team that is committed to using our resources wisely. These increased resources bode particularly well for our three existing Veterans Homes.

Second, we have all five new Veterans Homes underway at various stages. The Greater Los Angeles Ventura Counties (GLAVC) project is in various stages of completion, approaching the 40% mark for Lancaster and Ventura.

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*“...in Veterans Affairs, it is always a rolling year, since service, care, projects and needs never seem to abate because of the calendar.”*

*Tom Johnson*

## Message from the Secretary cont:

Letters of interest for residency continually are being received with more than 200 now on file. Staff is being hired and weekly meetings are being held to oversee the purchase of materials, to establish operating policies and to ensure that the structure, licensing and relationships are in place when the veterans homes are ready to open. Grand openings are scheduled for spring of next year for Lancaster and Ventura.

Third, we achieved success in our CalVet Home Loan program with the passage of HR 6081. After more than 13 years of trying, we are on track to re-vitalize the program by offering our QVMB loans to our younger veterans. All that is left is to pass our bond measure in November and then we'll be rolling.

Fourth, our first Women's Conference is scheduled for August 8<sup>th</sup> and in September we host the national Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs.

Fifth, our Cemetery and our Regional Veterans Service offices continue to exemplify service and professionalism. Recently our N. California Cemetery was featured on Fox News for their involvement with the Missing in America project.

Finally, we continue to receive good feedback from the relationships we have fostered with our many partners; the VA, the CVSOs, the many Veterans Service Organizations, the non-profit Veteran Service Agencies and our own State Agencies. All of these partners serve with us to try and make a positive difference to the lives of our 2.1 million veterans and their families. It is a privilege and an honor to serve them and to be part of a CDVA team that is committed to that mission.

Tom Johnson  
Secretary



**Veterans: You may be eligible for a 30-Year Home Loan.**

**Contact CalVet at 866-653-2510 or visit**

**[www.calvet.ca.gov/calvetloans](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/calvetloans) for more information.**

# Korea Revisit Program: Veterans Come Full Circle

By Gennet Paauwe  
Guest Writer

Have you ever wanted to return to a place that holds bitter-sweet memories?

In recent years, my dad, Lawrence Penfield, became more vocal about his experiences during the Korean War. He mused that one day he might like to go back to Korea and see how things turned out in the 55 years since he served there in the Air Force.

My dad, now 75, realized his dream in May 2008 when he and I traveled to Korea as guests of the Korea Veterans Association's "Revisit Korea" program. The Republic of South Korea annually sponsors returning veterans, enabling the country to thank our servicemen for their efforts in the "Forgotten War" that took place between 1951 and 1953.

We traveled through Military Historical Tours, designated carrier for the Revisit program, with 22 veterans and their companions to South Korea's capital city, Seoul. From the time of our arrival to our departure one week later, the veterans were treated with great respect by the Koreans for their service during the war.

Seoul, straddling the Han River and surrounded by mountains, is a city of some 10.4 million people. Seoul's streets are clean and many times I swore I was in a U.S. city until I saw the Korean-language signs. My dad remarked many times that this wasn't the Korea he remembered. His memories included homes with thatched roofs, dirt roads, rampant starvation and a war-torn landscape.

The one vivid memory that stuck with him was the pungent aroma of kimchee, a dish made of seasoned fermented vegetables. The dish's strong odor is difficult to get rid of once eaten.

Our week was filled with many war stories from the veterans travelling with us. Everyone had a shared experience whether they were in the Army, Air Force, Navy or Marines. Among us were a Major General and a Prisoner of War, vets who saw combat in the trenches and others who landed on Korean beaches with little more than a canteen, a rifle, and

their uniform. Others worked behind enemy lines as supply operatives; some became so ill with malaria or dysentery they were placed in hospital tents until they could return to duty. Food was scarce and most of them remember eating powdered eggs for days on end with no meat or vegetables in sight.

It was much worse for the Koreans fleeing battle lines, as their homes and villages were devastated and families torn apart. They were hungry, tired and scared. Even in those circumstances, vets told heart-warming stories: one taught a little boy to read English; another gave his rations to a hungry woman and her child; and, one helped build a sewing factory and an orphanage with money contributed by his unit.

A wreath-laying at the Seoul National Cemetery was our first group outing after flying into the city the previous evening. Veterans from the U.S.A., Guam and Turkey participated in the event. The cemetery is our equivalent to Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C., so it was a solemn moment when heads bowed to honor those who lost their lives in the Korean War.

The POW traveling with us recounted his capture by North Korean (Communist) forces early in the war. Surrounded on a hilltop, several in his Army troop were captured and spent most of the war in prison camps in what is now North Korea. His only sustenance was gruel and water, causing him to dramatically lose weight. He only ever ate one tiny piece of meat as a POW, and that was offered during an important autumn moon festival.

After the armistice was signed in July, 1953, he was brought to the Freedom Bridge at Panmunjom and returned to U.S. forces while lying on a stretcher. He was thin and much too ill to walk. But he was alive.

He got to *walk* over that bridge when we visited the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) at Panmunjom, where the armistice was signed.

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## Korea Revisit Program: Veterans Come Full Circle cont:

The DMZ runs across the peninsula from sea to sea. At Panmunjom the DMZ is called the Joint Security Area and is the only place where North and South Korean forces face one another at a place dubbed "Truce Village." It is a strange swath of land with formidable barriers to keep people out, whether they are razor wire fences, anti-tank barricades or simply a shotgun tower manned with ever-watchful soldiers. The area is a quiet place where soldiers are looking at each other through high-powered binoculars, ready to react within a moments' notice. Fortunately, there have been few incidents over the years, but the tension is high at this, the world's most heavily guarded border.

Since the area has been virtually uninhabited for more than 50 years, wildlife has thrived in the rolling hills with thickets of trees and lazy streams. In fact, there is talk about turning the area into a national park to protect many of the endangered species within its borders should the two Koreas ever sign a peace treaty.

An interesting piece of trivia from our tour guide: anyone visiting the DMZ at Panmunjom cannot give blood for a year since it is a recognized malaria area.

Back in Seoul, we had the opportunity to see the changing of the guard at Deoksugung Palace. The vibrant costumes and unusual musical instruments made for a showy ceremony with the ever-present Seoul high-rise office buildings and apartments as a backdrop to the palace's ornate rooflines. The palace walls provided a respite from the noisy city, birds flitted about in the courtyards and an elevated stone pathway used for the royalty led to the main building.

The National Folk Museum gave us a look at what my dad remembered: thatched huts and a simple agrarian lifestyle. While modernization has made grass huts just a memory now, the outdoor folk museum gave us a glimpse of what Korea would have been like before the war.

After a half-day at the folk museum, we returned to our Seoul hotel in anticipation of the banquet dinner and awarding of the Korean Ambassador of Peace medal from the Korean War Veterans Assn.



*"My dad, Lawrence Penfield, received his Korean Ambassador of Peace medal from General Choi who was truly honored to put the medal around his neck."*

*Genny Paauwe*

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## Korea Revisit Program: Veterans Come Full Circle cont:

The veterans in our party donned their jackets and ties and, along with their companions, mingled with dignitaries from the U.S. Embassy, Korean military and War Veterans Assn. leaders before sitting down to a 12-course gourmet meal of steak and lobster. A statement from the Korean president, Lee Myung-bak, was read thanking the vets. Live traditional and modern music was coupled with a drumming and dancing extravaganza. The finale was the medal presentation. My dad received his from General Choi who was truly honored to put the medal around my dad's neck.

The medal was presented with a certificate of thanks: "Everlasting gratitude of the Republic of Korea for the service you and your countrymen have performed in restoring and preserving our freedom and democracy. We cherish in our hearts the memory of your boundless sacrifices in helping us re-establish our Free Nation."

Our final day in Korea was spent touring Incheon, northwest of Seoul. The Battle of Incheon was pivotal; UN forces got the upper hand, allowing them to recapture Seoul. The landing beaches today are flanked by hotels, high-rise office buildings and a port. Our visit included a stop at the modern, well-run Incheon Landing Operation Memorial Hall set above the landing beaches.

All of the museums we visited in Korea were very well kept with modern audio-video presentations, war memorabilia on display and packed with uniformed school kids out for a field trip. It is clear that Koreans will never let younger generations forget about the war and what it means to be free.

Traveling with my dad to Korea helped me better understand what he went through during the war and how his efforts helped maintain the freedom of a country and its people. My dad came full circle, back to a country he didn't recognize any longer, to a people who recognized him.

More information regarding the Korean War Veterans Association's Revisit Program can be found online at [www.kwva.org/revisit/index.htm](http://www.kwva.org/revisit/index.htm).



*The author and her dad in Korea.*



## CALVET WRAPS UP THE MESSAGE

By Amir Rahimi  
Student Assistant

When driving on your local highway, you see big billboard advertisements for goods and services. The buses that commute in your neighborhood have logos of businesses or the newest radio superstar on their side in bright colors. These methods of advertising are always giving you flashy reasons why you should try their services and products. But this trend is not new. Actually, for the past more than 20 years, big business has been investing in this form of marketing with results that have proven to be extremely effective. And now, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) has also decided to give this flashy way of advertisement a spin around the block, by having three of CalVet's vehicles "wrapped" with a design of the CalVet logo and a phrase asking veterans to contact CalVet about their benefits.



With more than only marketing in mind, these wrapped vehicles are also a great tool to get information out into the community and educate folks. This form of marketing allows CalVet to inform Californians of the benefits veterans are entitled to due to their hard work and commitment to our glorious country. The "wrap" that is used along the sides of the Dodge Durangos is made from a plastic-type material that can be seen through from the inside but not the outside. These wraps are also very

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### National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Annual Fall Training Conference 2008

*Hosted by the California  
Department of Veterans  
Affairs*

**YOUNTVILLE, CALIFORNIA**

**SEPTEMBER 14-18, 2008**

**This Year's Conference  
Promises to be not only  
informative but also  
educational, fun, and tasty  
with opportunities to visit  
some of the best wineries  
in the world, the culinary  
institute of America and  
several historic shops and  
villages throughout the  
Napa Valley.**

**More Information On This  
Conference Is Available On  
CalVet's Website At:  
[WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV](http://WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV)**



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## CALVET WRAPS UP THE MESSAGE cont:

easy to remove when the department wishes to change the wrap's design or message with little or no damage to the vehicle whatsoever.

Sign-a-Rama, a local Sacramento small business, wrapped each vehicle at an estimated cost of \$1,600 per vehicle, thus giving each Dodge Durango a cost-effective, flashy, and hip look that catches the eye and spreads a message. Currently, CalVet has three wrapped vehicles; two in Sacramento and the other in San Diego. While these wrapped vehicles have only been advertising for the last couple of months, the department is actually currently gauging how effective they can be. The red, white, and blue sides of the vehicles really catch the eye and make CalVet seem like a celebrity when being driven down our roads. But CalVet is not only investing in local moving advertisements, the department will also be promoted on Sprint driver Mike Henry's #33 car during races, as well as on the sides of his vehicles' trailer when in tow. We can safely say that CalVet is now going full speed ahead in its efforts to reach veterans with important information about their benefits.



## Attention Veterans:

### Are you having trouble accessing proper dental care because of economic hardships? Help may be available!

The National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped's (NFDH) Donated Dental Services (DDS) program is a collaborative, direct way that the dental profession reaches out to individuals, such as yourself, going through economic hardship or with special needs.

Because of the extraordinary compassion of over 13,000 dentists and 3,000 dental laboratories across the country, DDS tends to the essential and comprehensive dental care needs of our nation's most vulnerable people; disabled, special needs veterans, elderly or medically-compromised individuals who cannot afford necessary treatment nor get public aid. DDS patients have slipped through the cracks of Medicaid and Medicare programs with nowhere else to turn.

Participation could not be easier. Dentists and labs take care of the patients, DDS does everything else; no headaches, no red tape. A DDS Coordinator is the liaison between the patient, the labs and the dentists, answering any and all questions, assisting the patient, the lab and the dentist with anything and everything. The goal of DDS is to return patients to good oral health, enabling them to reach an affordable maintenance level.

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## Are you having trouble accessing proper dental care cont:

**ELIGIBILITY:** Dentists have volunteered to provide comprehensive dental care at no charge to veterans of all ages who, because of a serious disability, advanced age, or medical problems, lack adequate income to pay for needed dental care. There are no rigid financial eligibility requirements.

**COST:** There is generally no cost to qualifying individuals; however, people in a position to pay for part of their care may be encouraged to do so, especially when laboratory work is involved.

### APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

- Step One** please complete, sign, and send in the application form available at [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov),
- Step Two** when your application comes up for review, a referral coordinator will call to obtain additional information (those who don't qualify will be told so during the call),
- Step Three** the referral coordinator will share the information about a person tentatively accepted with a volunteer dentist,
- Step Four** you will be notified of the dentist's name and phone number and you will be responsible for scheduling an appointment for an examination. Final acceptance into the program will only be made after the clinical examination when the specific treatment needs are established.

Please be patient; due to program limitations, we are not able to process each application as soon as it is received. The referral coordinator will contact you when your application comes up for review. [http://nfdh.org/joomla\\_nfdh/content/view/171/232/](http://nfdh.org/joomla_nfdh/content/view/171/232/)

### Veterans Homes Statistics as of July 31, 2008

	Chula Vista	Barstow	Yountville
Domiciliary	143	106	653
Residential Care for the Elderly	30		42
Skilled Nursing	163	6	173
Intermediate Care		51	131
Acute Care			4
Memory Care			40

## CalVet News

### California Department of Veterans Affairs

1227 O Street,  
Room 300

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: (916) 653-2158

Fax: (916) 653-1355

E-mail: [NewsforVeterans@cdva.ca.gov](mailto:NewsforVeterans@cdva.ca.gov)

JP Tremblay

Deputy Secretary for External Affairs

Jerry Jones

Chief, Legislation and Public Affairs

Jaime A. Arteaga

Editor

## ATTENTION VETERANS!

### HELP A KID FULFILL HIS DREAM

Hello. My name is Kyle Nappi. I am 18 years old and I live in Ostrander, Ohio (USA). I was wondering if you could do me a favor.

I have a big interest in history, specifically WWII. I collect military medals, patches, badges, insignia, field gear, and a very unique thing, veteran autographs. I have a collection of autographs from military veterans who served during WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War, and the present war in Iraq.



*17-year-old Kyle Nappi*

I have been interested in history for over 6 years now, and I have collected the autographs and stories from nearly 1,600 veterans in 20 countries. The oldest veteran is currently 112 years old and the youngest enlisted at age 14. I have autographs from Pearl Harbor survivors, D-Day veterans, airman, POWs, USS Indianapolis survivors, Holocaust survivors, and even German soldiers!

I have attached an article (see above article by Rachel Tolliver) that was published in The Turret (a Ft. Knox, KY newspaper) about my collection in November.

I was recently interviewed by the American Legion for an article that will appear in their August magazine. Here is an internet link to the online article (different than the magazine article, which will appear in August): <http://www.legion.org/whatsnew/publications/newsletter/story?id=635>

Recently, I also had the privilege of going to Washington, D.C. during the early part of March. I was

invited to the Pentagon for a Ceremony honoring WWI veterans. I was able to meet with the last American WWI veteran, Frank Buckles.

I hope you will assist me and fill out the questionnaire at the bottom of this article and send it to me. It includes some basic questions. I ask military veterans about their service time. I was wondering if it is possible to provide any veterans (who are interested) with my questionnaire, put me in touch with them, or pass along the word about my collection. Please let me know if this is possible.

My main purpose for writing this is it to share with you that there are people from my generation who do remember the past and the sacrifices that were made for our great country. I would greatly appreciate it if you could pass the word around that there are people who remember, along with the information about my collection. Thank you very much for your time

#### Questionnaire:

1. Signature:
2. Name Printed:
3. Today's Date:
4. Hometown:
5. Branch Of Military:
6. Date You Enlisted/Were Drafted:
7. Date You Were Discharged:
8. Rank(s):
9. Division:
10. Your Age When You Entered The Service:
11. Duties:
12. Stationed:
13. Battles/Campaigns:
14. Awards Received (And How You Received Them):
15. Other Information/Comments:
16. Signature:

Thanks

Kyle Nappi  
[knap607@yahoo.com](mailto:knap607@yahoo.com)  
[www.veteranstoday.com](http://www.veteranstoday.com)



## VA, Monster Partner for Veteran Job Seekers

### *Veteran-Owned Businesses Listed*

In a new plan to help veterans find jobs, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has partnered with Monster Government Solutions, a division of Monster Worldwide, Inc., a company that markets online employment services to employers and job seekers.

Part of VA's mission is to assist veterans to gain employment. Monster, in partnership with VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise, provides veteran-owned small businesses the opportunity to post job openings for veterans, including service-disabled veterans, at a large price discount. Monster will post the job openings for 60 days, twice as long as for other employers.

"This government-corporate partnership represents the best kind of effort to help those who gave up time in their lives to serve their country and return to an economic community that may not recognize their skills," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "The program should make it easier for employers to find qualified job candidates as well as veteran suppliers and service contractors."

To participate in Monster job listings, veteran business owners must be listed in VA's online Vendor Information Pages (VIP) maintained by the Department's Center for Veterans Enterprise at <http://www.VetBiz.gov>.

In addition to helping veteran owners get business from other companies and prospective veteran employees find jobs, VA's VIP pages will give Monster a source for purchasing services itself and VA will refer appropriate, listed suppliers to Monster.

The VA-Monster agreement is initially for two years and provides for extensions.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1537>

## VA Announces On-Line Claims Applications

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced on July 16, 2008 that on-line applications are now accepted from veterans, survivors and other claimants filing initial applications for disability compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits without the additional requirement to submit a signed paper copy of the application.

Effective immediately, VA will now process applications received through its on-line application website (VONAPP) without the claimant's signature. The electronic application will be sufficient authentication of the claimant's application for benefits. Normal development procedures and rules of evidence will still apply to all VONAPP applications.

VONAPP ([www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm](http://www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm)) is a Web-based system that benefits both internal and external users. Veterans, survivors and other claimants seeking compensation, pension, education, or vocational rehabilitation benefits can apply electronically without the constraints of location, postage cost, and time delays in mail delivery.

VONAPP reduces the number of incomplete applications received by VA, decreasing the need for additional development by VA claims processors. The on-line application also provides a link to apply for VA health care benefits and much more.

Over 3.7 million veterans and beneficiaries receive compensation and pension benefits from VA and approximately 523,000 students receive education benefits. Approximately 90,000 disabled veterans participate in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program.

For more information about VA benefits, go to VA's website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or call our toll-free number at 1-800-827-1000.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1529>

## NEWS FROM YOUNTVILLE

### "Operation KIKS – A Project for Heart and Sole"

By Lou Zanner

Home Member Paul Cheatham made a tour of the poorest-of-the-poor villages in Johannesburg, Soweta and Alexandria, South Africa in 2004--locations which have travel agents; hotels and tourist organizations discourage visiting. The poverty that struck Cheatham the hardest was the children's lack of shoes: nothing to protect their feet from the hard rocks and dirt ground that is their world underfoot. Unable to dismiss the image of their plight, he launched "Operation KIKS," (Kind Initiative Kids Shoes). As he states it, "For the kids that have no shoes on their feet and no way to get them." He started by buying a few pair of children's shoes and began saving for a return trip to South Africa. His capital for this venture was to be the money he earned working at his Home Member jobs of delivering meals on wheels and assisting AMVETS Bingo. Also, he began collecting bottles and cans to recycle for a few extra dollars.



His coworker, Home Member Jerry Rambajan, who also delivers meals on wheels, learned of Cheatham's plans. The appeal of the project immediately made Rambajan the first donor of funds in addition to become a volunteer "partner" to do whatever was necessary to bring in more shoes and getting them ready for shipment. Likewise, a third partner was added with Jean Bergen, post office

employee, to provide storage and packing space for what was to be Cheatham's goal of 101 pairs of shoes--the number corresponding to AMVETS Post 101, of which he is a life member. With publicity from the Yountville Sun, some donations began to flow in. Dick Hum provided the AMVETS Post as a conduit for receiving the necessary contributions for more shoes and necessary transportation and travel expenses. To date, Cheatham has bought over 300 pairs of shoes and provided for flight tickets with virtually his own funds--and he plans to add "bake sales" to his list of fundraising activities. This he started on the 4th of July in a booth at the Veterans Home which posted his travel pictures, passing out "Operation KIKS" picture cards and selling cookies and cornbread.



Every day, Cheatham and his partners are busy at their project arranging the many details of shipping all the shoes that can be obtained to arrive by ship in Johannesburg, South Africa in November. He will be at the port with truck and driver to load and deliver his precious cargo to the children of the orphanages and villages where he had been before. Since Cheatham has had 45-years of combined social work and community service experience, and a long association with NATO as a Community Services Officer, he has many contacts with organizations that will be of valuable help in achieving his ambition.

Paul Cheatham, a compulsive worker, is surprised by his project's success so far; but he is still paying for shoes and many necessary expenses from his personal earnings. His selfless motivation helps him plan and continue to work toward achieving his November dream of "Operation KIKS--A Project for Heart and Sole"--to bring an unimaginable charitable gift from the United States to Nelson Mandela's world in South Africa.

## THE FINAL WORD

### Governor Schwarzenegger Supports Military Veterans, Signs Legislation to Put Veterans Bond Act of 2008 On Ballot

On July 15, 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger signed SB 1572 Wyland (R-Carlsbad), which places the Veterans Bond Act of 2008 on the Nov. 4, 2008 statewide ballot. If approved by voters, the measure would help thousands of veterans of recent conflicts buy a home or farm through the state's CalVet Home Loan program. The bond act would have no impact on the state's General Fund because veterans repay the bond costs through low-interest mortgages.

"The Veterans Bond Act will help California's veterans achieve the American dream of homeownership," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "I'm asking voters to say yes in November so that veterans who risked their lives in places like Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan will be eligible to join the more than 420,000 others who have bought a home with a CalVet loan - at no expense to taxpayers."

The Veterans Bond Act of 2008 asks voters to approve \$900 million in Veterans General Obligation Bonds, which will allow the California Department of Veterans Affairs to fund the purchase of homes and farms for veterans under the CalVet Home Loan Program. This money will fund approximately 1,300 low-interest loans each year for California veterans without expense to the state's General Fund.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs was the sponsor of SB 1572.

**California Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**External Affairs**  
**1227 O Street, Room 300**  
**Sacramento, CA 95814**